

Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh St. SW
Washington, DC 20590

October 16, 2002

Refer to: HOTO-1

Mr. Steve Edwards
Mobility Management Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
Washington Building, 12th Floor
1100 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Thank you for your October 9 email message to Mr. Scott Wainwright of our staff, requesting an interpretation of apparently conflicting language in Section 3B.10 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD.)

Your message referred to the pavement markings to be used on the approach from a two-lane undivided road to the nose of a median island at the start of a divided section of the roadway. You asked whether the diagonal markings in the neutral area, from where the centerline splits to where it reaches the nose of the raised median, are mandatory or optional. You cited text from Section 3B.10, in the first Standard statement and in the second and third Option statements, that made it unclear whether these diagonal markings in the neutral area are required by the MUTCD or are just optional.

The "diagonal line or lines" referred to in the first Standard of Section 3B.10 is intended to refer to the tapered portion of the double yellow centerline that starts at the physical center of the road and runs diagonally over to within 1 to 2 feet of the approach end of the median. Note that in the subsequent Guidance paragraph the text refers to the "taper length of the diagonal line markings." This is the "L" dimension shown in Figure 3B-13. In the second and third Option statements of Section 3B.10, the "diagonal approach markings" that "may be placed in the neutral area" are intended to refer to the markings in the neutral area that are commonly referred to as "cross-hatching." Thus, the tapered (diagonal) sections of double yellow centerline approaching the median nose are mandatory but the diagonal cross-hatching in the neutral area is optional.

The potential confusion stems from the use of the word "diagonal" in both the Standard and the Option, when in reality two different markings are being referred to. It is our interpretation that the word "diagonal" in the second sentence of the first Standard and in the Subsequent Guidance

Statement of Section 3B.10 is intended to be the word "tapered." The Federal Highway Administration will consider making revisions to Section 3B.10 to reflect this interpretation in a future MUTCD rulemaking proposal.

Thank you for writing on this subject. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Wainwright at 202-366-0857. Please note that we have assigned your request the following official interpretation number and title: "3-156(I)—Section 3B.10 Cross-hatch Markings." Please refer to this number in future correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Ernie Huckaby for

Shelley J. Row, P.E.
Director, Office of Transportation
Operations